ORIGIN/ACTION

RM/R	REP	AF
ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR 5
E	P 1	IO
L	FBO	AID
		S/P
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR 4
ARMY 5	CIA 10	NAVY 5
OSD 15	USIA 8	NSA 3

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

FOR RM USE ONLY

RECORDS CENTER

A-34 NO.

CONFIDENTIAL

HANDLING INDICATOR

1963 OCT 25 AM 8 25

TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO: ATHENS, NEA/GTI

RYAN
ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION
BRANCH

FROM : Amconsul THESSALONIKI DATE: October 25, 1963

SUBJECT: Electoral Campaign in Northern Greece

REF :

SUMMARY

During the past 10 days, Center Union leader George PAPANDREOU appears to have captured the imagination of many voters in Northern Greece. He has accomplished this by virtue of his considerable speaking ability and by hammering at an issue which is becoming a key one in the 1963 electoral campaign, i.e., democracy in Greece. At the same time former Prime Minister CARAMANLIS, in Northern Greece at least, has been less successful than in previous electoral campaigns in generating enthusiasm for his person and party among the electorate. The result of this change in the climate, if it continues in the days ahead, could result in a loss of 10 or more of the 54 seats which ERE held in the last Parliament in this part of the country.

- - - - - - - -

On the three successive Sundays just prior to the October 1961 elections, the leaders of the three Greek political parties, Caramanlis, Papandreou and PASSALIDES, addressed large rallies in Thessaloniki's main square. Recently the same three leaders have been the principal speakers at Sunday evening rallies preceding the elections scheduled for November 3. In both 1961 and this year Caramanlis spoke on the first Sunday and Passalides on the last.

It is interesting to compare the Consulate General's comments on the rallies then and now. Caramanlis' address in 1961 drew large crowds

Decontrolled following: Oct. 25, 1973

12-3-63 RM/R-File action stated if doctor/93

FORM DS-323 4-62 CONFIDENTIAL

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY ☑ In ☐ Out

Drafted by: DAZachary:bck 10/24/63

Communication Classification Approved by: Robert S. Folsom, Consul General

Clearances:

and according to most observers, he drew the largest crowd since Marshall PAPAGOS' campaign speech here in 1952. A "tumultuous ovation" greeted Caramanlis when he arrived and also at the end of his speech. In both cases it was more enthusiastic than the applause he received during his talk. This was taken to mean that his personal popularity was greater than the issues discussed and programs outlined. The rally was judged an "auspicious beginning" to the ERE campaign in Northern Greece and as a clear reaffirmation of Caramanlis' popularity. Papandreou's rally one week later drew a crowd one third smaller in size, and a drizzle dampened the spirits of an already listless crowd. The speech was considered disappointing, and the whole rally had a certain unenthusiastic atmosphere which made it a "rather dismal beginning" for the Center Union's campaign in Northern Greece. In 1961, Passalides drew a small but enthusiastic crowd of 5,000 plus another 5,000 onlookers. No major incidents occurred during this EDA rally but a number of individual ERE hecklers were escorted away and there were reports that police had put pressure on some to keep them away from the rally.

The rallies held on the past three Sunday evenings were different in impact. It was Papandreou this time who drew an estimated one third more spectators than Caramanlis, and he drew an even larger crowd than the former did in 1961. While it is true that Caramanlis' speech was well received when he spoke here on October 6 of this year, it was Papandreou who was given the enthusiastic ovations which have marked a turning point in the electoral campaign. As for Passalides, he drew a crowd 50% larger than he did in 1961. This crowd was composed of enthusiastic party followers plus an outer ring of onlookers who, without applauding, were listening with considerable concentration to the EDA leader's talk. Perhaps more significantly, there were no reports of police interference or of ERE hecklers who dared to interrupt this EDA circus (see A-30, Oct. 24, 1963).

As this is a report on the political situation in Northern Greece as of this date, the comments and observations contained in this airgram may be significantly altered by the campaign, which is gathering more and more momentum. Further, it is always possible that some major issue could be injected into it which could produce a change of feelings of an appreciable part of the electorate.

The recent political rallies held in Thessaloniki provide only one of several indications that the tide appears to be running against Caramanlis in Northern Greece. Perhaps the most striking fact in the campaign is reports of a new political climate in the area. This development is not only taking place in Thessaloniki, but is happening more noticeably in other provincial cities of Macedonia and Thrace. There are further reports that the new atmosphere is also reaching down to the village level. This new climate can be described as an openness of discussion of political issues which is unprecedented in recent years. Just why numbers of Greeks living in cities of 10,000 to 40,000 population felt constrained to guard their comments on the political situation in the past is not entirely clear. However, they now feel free to criticize openly and without fear the policies of the recent ERE governments. For example, Greeks are now actively discussing the alleged ERE attempts to

smear the judges investigating the LAMBRAKIS case and are also debating the real meaning of the arrest and jailing of four top police officials. Many persons insist that everyone, including ERE supporters, is convinced the Government had a hand in the Lambrakis incident. The CU, for its part, would like to believe that this new stirring or "revma" is the result of its unrelenting campaign. In any event, Papandreou's issue of democracy seems to have appealed to the electorate here more than any other issue up to this point.

There are other indications that the ERE will not capture 57% of the vote and the 54 seats it won in this area in the 1961 elections. Some other indications of this trend are as follows:

Loss and Shift of Electoral Seats

ERE in the past has drawn considerable support from this predominantly agricultural and, in many places, politically conservative area. Some changes have taken place, however, which may weaken that party's hold in Northern Greece. This area will have one seat less (81) than it did in 1961. In addition, five nomes, predominantly agricultural, which voted 74%, 70%, 64%, 52% and 49.5% for the ERE in 1961, have each lost one electoral seat (Florina, Kastoria, Kozani, Kavalla and Xanthi, respectively). On the other hand, Thessaloniki has gained two new seats and the growing urban centers of Verria and Katerini, near Thessaloniki, have both picked up one seat apiece. This shifting of seats indicates that the conservative villager is moving to the more politically minded centers in pursuit of his fortune, and is thus becoming more exposed to the more radical political sentiments of the city. Another factor which could hurt ERE is the emigration of rural workers to West Germany. Of the 100,000 odd Greek workers in West Europe, more than half are from Northern Greece and many of these have left their villages to work in Europe since the October 1961 elections.

Dissatisfaction of Special Groups

Another factor which will probably cut into ERE strength in the area is discontent among special groups. Some of the groups which have made known their unhappiness with policies of ERE Government are laborers, due to lack of job opportunities and the alleged anti-labor policies of the government; civil servants and teachers because of low salaries and the latter group's sense of frustration over the poor state of education; certain groups of farmers in the area, such as fruit growers, because state assistance has not been forthcoming after serious crop losses occurred; university students and people under 30, who are generally considered to be either pro-Progressive, CU or EDA.

[redacted]

Other Factors

Another consideration appears to be the "make the vote count" psychology of many Greek voters here. If he plans to oppose the ERE, he has a strong inclination to vote for the Center Union, even though he might prefer MARKEZINIS (who is not expected to pick up even one seat in Northern Greece) or for an EDA candidate. He does this for the simple reason that he believes the CU is more likely to obtain meaningful size in the next Parliament.

Another factor which will tend to improve the chances of the two opposition groups is the feeling that many ERE candidates have not been particularly energetic as deputies in the past. Also, the cold war detente and the absence of the "bomb the Acropolis" gaffe by KHRUSHCHEV and the Bulgarian threats that figured importantly in the 1961 electoral campaign may affect ERE's showing. A further consideration is that the Army vote is not expected to be overwhelmingly pro-ERE as it was in 1961, but to be instead closer to the national voting averages. For this election, the soldier's vote will be counted in his home district rather than the place where he is stationed. Since most of the Greek army is stationed in Northern Greece, these two changes are likely to affect ERE's vote adversely. Other considerations are the new proportional electoral system, the revised electoral lists, and the stringent measures which have been taken to insure that the elections will be conducted in an honest manner.

There are other Greek attitudes which will tend to move voters away from the ERE as well. One is the "time for a change" psychology which seems to be very prevalent at this time. Another is the inherent Greek love of fireworks even at his own expense, which is illustrated by the following story now circulating here. According to the story, a scorpion, after considerable talking, finally persuades a turtle to carry him across a river, since he points out it would be suicide for him to do the turtle any harm while crossing the river. Half way across, however, he stings the turtle fatally, and when the turtle looks up imploringly and asks why he did it, the answer is something to the effect that he just couldn't resist it.

In the trend away from ERE, EDA rather than the Center Union could be the principal beneficiary. EDA appears to be campaigning harder than the other two parties (CU probably next hardest) and is reportedly spending substantial sums of money for the campaign. However, given the present enthusiasm for Papandreou's personality and campaign, it seems much more likely that the latter will get 50% - 70% of the seats lost by the ERE.

The ERE, for its part, has also certain factors in its favor. One is the popularity and strength of some ERE candidates such as MAKRIS and Caramanlis himself. Another is the conservative voting pattern in several rural areas, in the border area villages and among the bulk of the Moslem population of

Thrace. Another is the deep split in the heart of the CU group which will doubtless influence some to vote for the ERE. Caramanlis is considered by many to have won a moral victory over the Queen this past summer, and this belief should enhance his image in some quarters. Tangible signs in the countryside (irrigation reclamation projects, refrigeration and storage buildings, etc.) of the Government's effort to improve the lot of the farmer are a permanent monument to the ERE's concern and achievement on behalf of Northern Greece's rural population. And most important, Caramanlis still remains popular and is considered by many voters to be the only person capable of leading the country at this time.

These considerations being noted, it appears, however, that the various factors tend to show a trend away from the ERE in this area. The Consulate General believes at this point, some ten to eleven days before the election, that ERE will probably lose 10 of the 54 seats it now holds in the 15 nomes of Northern Greece. The CU is likely to pick up 5 to 6 of these seats, and the EDA the rest. If projected on a national scale, it would mean that Caramanlis will have considerably fewer than the 160 seats he will need to form a relatively stable government for an extended period of time. [redacted]

For the Consul General:

Dan A. Zachary
American Consul

DECLASSIFIED